Schorr leak remains a mystery

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House investigator testified Monday that any one of five congressmen, three or four staff aides or a number of federal officers could have leaked a secret intelligence committee report to CBS newsman Daniel Schorr.

Chief investigator David Bowers told the House Ethics Committee that distribution of photocopies of the report was so disorganized that committee investigators could not pin down who leaked it.

"Lack of any systematic control on the report as it was turned loose to the staff," Bowers testified, "made any accountability impossible — then or now."

Asked whether he believes the report was leaked by someone connected with the House committee or someone in the administration, Bowers refused to answer in public session.

The chief investigator was leadoff witness at the committee's public hearings on its $150,000 House-ordered investigation into the leak of the disbanded House Intelligence Committee's final report.

Schorr has acknowledged he was responsible for publication in The Village Voice, a New York weekly, last February of the report which contains information still classified secret on covert U.S. intelligence operations.

Chairman John Flynt, D-Ga., said the public hearings on the leak will have several purposes including determination of whether the committee should recommend disciplinary action against any Congress member or House employe.

"We now have reason to believe," Flynt said, "that there were serious violations and breaches of security during the course of the select committee's investigation."

Bowers told Flynt's committee that interviews with Intelligence Committee members, the committee's staff, the members' staffs and 207 federal agency employes produced no one admitting he leaked the report to Schorr.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger was among those interviewed, Bowers said, as was CIA Director George Bush and former CIA Director William E. Colby.

The investigator gave no names in narrowing the number of copies that could have been leaked to Schorr to about 50. He said Schorr apparently photocopied someone's copy Sunday, Jan. 25.

Five of the Intelligence Committee's 13 members had copies of the final draft, the one that Schorr obtained, at home that day, Bowers testified.

He said two committee staff members and a congressman's aide had copies at home that day.

He said a second congressman's aide had had a copy in his possession the previous day while transporting it to the congressman's home.

Committee investigators also determined that 40 copies of the final draft were in five departments around town besides the White House, Bowers testified. Copies were at the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, the Defense Department, the Justice Department and the Office of Management and Budget.

He said six officials or employes of the Justice Department, including the FBI, are known to have had access to the report away from their official work space at various times during the weekend.

The 40 copies distributed to the agencies were made from a copy that a committee member acknowledged he loaned to the CIA Saturday, Jan. 24, Bowers said.

Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., refused to comment on reports that he loaned his copy to the CIA, saying he would testify before the Ethics Committee on Tuesday.

Besides that, 88 copies of an earlier draft of the committee's final report had been photocopied and distributed among the federal agencies, Bowers said.

Although Bowers' report drew no conclusions, he suggested that investigators found one clear violation by committee staff members of an agreement they signed not to disclose any information from the committee to any unauthorized person without approval of the full committee.

He said that was on New Year's Eve when the staff invited several reporters in for a briefing on information indicating the FBI had tried to coerce a witness.